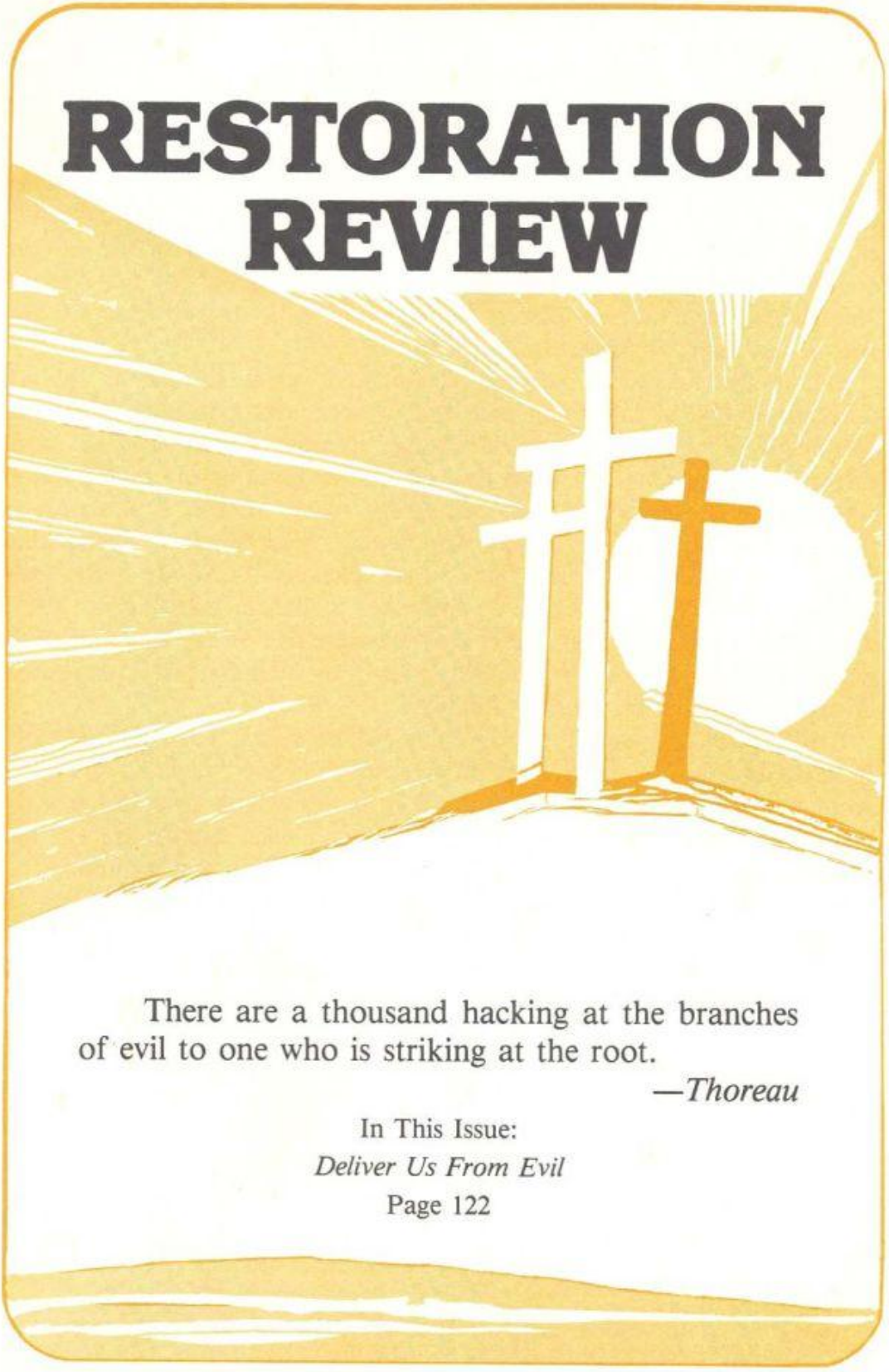
RESTORATION REVIEW



There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.

—*Thoreau*

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The Doe of the Dawn: A Christian World View. . .

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

One of the famous British writers is quoted as saying that if he could ask the Sphinx one question it would be *Is the universe friendly?* The prayer that Jesus of Nazareth taught his disciples to pray implies that the universe is indeed friendly or on man's side, but that it has unfriendly forces at work within it. Surely if we can address the Ruler of the universe as *Father* we can believe that there is a great deal going for us. And yet Jesus would have us pray *Deliver us from evil,* as if to warn that we may well be put upon by forces too much for us.

Evil in the Scriptures includes plagues and curses as well as sin and lawlessness. Evil is something bad, that which hurts man and denies him well-being. It may be disease or famine; it may be pestilence or moral corruption. Evil is not as much the opposite of good as the corruption of good, or good gone awry. It is *missing the mark,* whether it be nature or man, willful or unwillful. There are *natural* evils. whether earthquakes, floods, droughts, crop failures, pain, fires, diseases. There are *moral* evils, whether political corruption, war, injustice, prejudice, crime, child abuse, drug abuse, racism. Then there are *circumstantial* evils, which may be neither natural or moral primarily, such as unhappiness, depression, divorce, unemployment, incompatibility.

Evil, of whatever nature or source, is evil because it hurts and destroys. It adulterates purity, mars integrity, corrupts sincerity, destroys goodness. And yet evil is not an abstract entity. It is as real as goodness and as active as virtue. It is as real as cancer, aggression and hate. Things are evil and people are evil and ideas are evil. Systems, philosophies and institutions are evil. Evil does not float around unattached. It is usually well organized for its onslaught on vulnerable man.

Deliver us from evil infers all this to be the case. We are at war in our universe. Evil may very well overpower us. But it need not. There is one who rules in the affairs of men who has the power to *deliver.* The word Jesus used in his prayer implies a sure, final, victorious deliverance, once for all. We can position ourselves, by the grace of heaven, so that we will be protected. Evil or the evil one may attack us, but it or he cannot win.

We need not bother ourselves as to whether our Lord refers to evil or the evil one, for the point is the same. It is the evil one who is behind all evil. As we escape evil we escape him; as we escape him we escape evil. The point is that we need help and that there is a Helper. We are to pray for deliverance, for protection, for victory. This implies trust on our

part, as well as wholeness of commitment. This is the essence of the Lord's prayer: *reverence,* which is a constant awareness of God. Without this there can be no deliverance from evil.

During the last century there was the optimistic view that the greater part of evil can be eliminated by improving man's institutions. Evil is not as much in man as it is in his environment, such as poor housing and poverty, it was believed. The events of recent decades, which includes not only world-wide wars but holocausts of nations as well, has brought home to us that our problem is not in our stars but in ourselves, as Shakespeare put it. In terms of all the evil that befalls man he has been his own worst enemy. While it is true that some evils are part and parcel of our kind of universe and beyond our control, *most* of man's pain and distress has been self-inflicted. Sin is the culprit, plain, old-fashioned sin, which has been so long neglected in our thinking that Dr. Menninger appropriately asked the question that became the title of his book, *Whatever Became of Sin?*

Sin not only corrupts man's spirit but affects his thinking as well, especially in persuading him that sin is not so bad after all. A "good" guy like John Wayne (I saw a bumper sticker that read *God Bless John Wayne!*) or a "saint" like Mohatma Ghandi may be guilty of a few little sins that do not really matter, but it could hardly be said of them what Scripture lays upon all mankind: *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* It even says *none is righteous, no, not one* (Rom. 3:10). These are truths that man, because he is a sinner, is reluctant to accept, *seriously* accept. He really believes that he is righteous on his own and does not need God, not *really,* and so he lives as if there were no God. This is the most fatal sin of all, which is not only a failure to reverence him but a refusal to recognize him.

The prophet Isaiah wrote a line about the sinfulness of the human race that is as relevant as today's newspaper: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way." He adds: "We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment" (Is. 65:6).

Man's problem is that he does not believe this, and this is why the apostle Paul refers to "the offense of the cross" (Gal. 5:11). The cross is a stumbling block because its message is that man is lost except for the grace of God. If people now fornicate with open abandon, demand the acceptance of "alternate lifestyles" even to homosexual marriage, and involve children in their pornographic enterprise, it is because God does not count and sin is meaningless. The cross insults them, even if they dangle one about their necks!

We do not need an extensive theology of sin, for we all know, if we want to know, that sin is what we think, say, and do. It does not float around in the abstract. It is transgression of law, not only the injunctions of Scripture but all moral law, of which we are all aware, and we all know that we fall short, very short, of what we know to be right. This is what makes us sinners.

Those who live decent, law-abiding lives (supposedly!) see themselves as good as most anyone else and so see no need for God's grace. One can deceive himself along these lines so long as he does not have a very high standard for himself. Once he measures himself alongside Jesus' greatest commandments of love for God and man, or the Ten Commandments, which call for right motive as well as right action, he sees that he can't cut it. Whatever be one's religion, whether Buddhist, Hindu, Moslem or Jewish-Christian, there are laws and ideals beyond his reach. His conscience condemns him whether he looks to the Koran, the Bhagavad-Gita, or the Bible. When he is introspective enough, man realizes he is a sinner. But he is reluctant to be *that* introspective!

The Scriptures make it clear that man has two distinct impulses that are at war, one for evil and one for good. Early in the biblical drama the God of the Hebrews sized up human nature as: "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21), while the prophets insisted that "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9). In Gal. 5 Paul concedes such a conflict within man, implying that the "flesh," not simply the body but carnal passions, dominates the "spirit." So even the Christian must have help: "Walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

This is part of the "mystery of iniquity" that the Scriptures speak of: *man's propensity to sin.* The enigma is apparent even with the righteous, as with Paul himself: *I do not understand my own actions,* he says in Rom. 7:15, granting that "I am carnal, sold under sin" and "I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it." It is only as a believer that he finds a way out of the enigma: "Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

While man is a strange mixture of good and evil impulses, the evil dominates, especially given the circumstances in which we must live in this world, hardships and temptations being what they are. Ah, for the supplication, *Deliver us from evil!,* which must in part be a prayer for deliverance from ourselves.

We can hardly have an adequate view of ourselves and our universe without a recognition of sin and its consequences, for both man and his environment are grossly affected by sin. Until we see death and destruction as the penalties for sin, we will be blind

to so many other things, particularly the holiness and magnanimity of God. We can never see the grace of God until we see what sin has done to us.

Charles Spurgeon was one of the great preachers of the grace of God, and he tells how he finally came to find grace. While he had no "extra-ordinary sins," it was when he applied the Ten Commandments to his own life that he came to realize his "outrageous sin against God." It came' about when he met Moses carrying the law. This is why it is important for sinful man to meet Moses as well as Christ, for he is not ready for grace until he is stung by law.

This is why it is foolish for us to talk about not being under law. We are not under law so as to be justified by it, but we are always under law as a reminder of our sinfulness. Paul said it well, for after granting that the law is holy, just and good, he explains that it was only when the commandment came home to him that "Sin revived and I died." It was only then that he was ready for grace.

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A LESSON ON UNITY FROM MARCO POLO

It must have been frustrating to Marco Polo when none of his fellow Ventians believed him when he told of the wonders of Cathay (China), after spending 20 years in that enchanted land. There he stood, with his father and an uncle, in outlandish and travel-worn garments, way back in 1295 A.D. when those in Venice and the western world knew nothing of the orient, telling tales of a fabulous civilization that defied the imagination.

It was only when the travelers slit open the seams of their coats and poured out an abundance of precious stones, known only to the orient, that the people believed them and at last heaped honors upon them. Later Marco Polo commanded a galley ship and was taken prisoner. In a dungeon he dictated to a fellow prisoner the *Book of Marco Polo,* which revealed for the first time for western readers the vast continent of Asia. Think of the books we would have missed had it not been for prison terms!

More precious than all the jewels Polo brought with him from Asia is a precious story he tells in the book he wrote in that dungeon. It is a legend he heard while in Persia, from the very town where the Magi lived who visited the Christ child in Bethlehem. The legend has it that one of the wise men was young, another middle-aged, and the third was aged. As each wise man returned from his visit with Jesus, the others would ask, *What is he like?* The young man reported that Jesus was young, the middle-aged that he was in his middle years, while the aged told of his being an old man. Each had seen him in terms of his own

needs. Jesus was one who understood the problems of youth, and so the young man saw him as young. So with the other two, each seeing him as being like him, even in age.

There is an important truth here, for our Lord *is* the Savior of all and each person can fully identify with him. Jesus understands the problems of children and he knows how they think and feel. So it is with every age, whether the temptations of youth or the frailties of old age.

And this reaches beyond age differentials. The blacks can think of Jesus as black and the hispanics can see him as brown. Women see him as their liberator and homosexuals see him as at least sympathetic with their plight. Since he transcends time, place and circumstance, there is no way to modernize him. However much a business man may worship him, one can hardly put Jesus in a business suit. Or on the papal throne. Perhaps not even in a modern pulpit. Yet his lengthened shadow reaches over all the earth. Jesus of Nazareth is the cosmic Christ. He is the only miracle the world needs to see.

There is more to the legend that Polo learned in Persia. Once the three wise men discussed their different views of what they had seen in their visit with Christ, they resolved to return to Jesus and visit him together. This time they saw him as he really was, a child born to be king and savior.

Each on his own, apart from the others, saw what he wanted to see. But together they could see beyond their own narrow perspective to the real truth.

That is why they were wise men. They could have quarreled, for each was sure that he was right and the others wrong. They loved the Christ enough that they could go to him together and see him as he really is.

One of our most deadly maladies is our refusal to change. We see what we want to see and we don't want to be disturbed. This sinful attitude lurks behind our divisions. We see in the Christ and his church that which suits our tradition, and we can hardly talk with others who have a different view. But if *together* we go to Christ, each with his cup empty, we will find the peace that only he can give. It is this peace that makes us one: "For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies" (Eph. 2:14).

Never despise the man in tattered clothing, for he may pour forth precious jewels from a forbidden land. And he may pass along a story that points up a truth that makes the difference between peace and enmity. --- *the Editor*

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BAPTIZED, YET UNBAPTIZED

Should you read such a book as *Baptism: Studies in the Original Christian Baptism* by Johannes Warns, you would find accounts of "mass" and "forced" baptisms. Back in the eighth century, for example, the emperor Charlemagne appointed the death penalty for any who would not be baptized. In the fifth century when Clovis, king of the Franks was baptized, apparently for political reasons, thousands of his subjects joined him in the river. It must not have meant much since Clovis remained "an intriguing bloodthirsty man of violence, to whom Christianity was just good enough to smooth the way to reach his political ends," as history records it.

Now and again through history the poor, persecuted Jews were compelled to become Christians by *forced* baptism. In the fifteenth century the king of Portugal compelled Jews to be baptized, which was carried out by dragging them by the beard or hair to the font, amidst their screams of protest.

And it seems unlikely that the Russians would ever have had a prince who would attempt to force baptism on the entire state. In the tenth century Vladimir, who baptized 2,000 with his own hands, announced that those who did not want to be listed as his enemies should be baptized on an appointed day.

The wildest story of all is how the prince of the Normans was baptized in the name of Christ, after which he slaughtered his prisoners as a sacrifice to his heathen gods!

While such baptisms were usually by sprinkling or pouring, they were sometimes by immersion. Roman Catholics and Protestants alike persecuted the Anabaptists, who believed in adult baptism by immersion, by *drowning* them.

These stories out of history dramatize a truth that we all accede to: *that baptism is something more than the outward, physical act,* irrespective of whether one is forced into it or does it voluntarily. There is such a thing as being baptized (outwardly) and yet not baptized (inwardly).

It all raises a troubling question. If a person's baptism is imperfect because he was forced to do it, what is the standard for a perfect baptism? If no baptism can be said to be *perfect,* how imperfect can it be and still be a valid baptism?

Suppose someone is baptized because others are being baptized, or to please a wife or a parent, even when the person is a professed believer?

Or for social reasons or business reasons? Or when "too young to know what I was doing"?

Is there a built-in retroactive value to baptism, so that years later when one comes to a living faith the baptism of long ago takes on meaning? Might there first be the external act, then years later the internal reality?

Or is one to be baptized again when he *really* believes? Then again and again perhaps as his faith grows deeper and deeper?

The prophets weighed a similar problem in reference to circumcision, for they had the situation of people being "circumcised but yet uncircumcised," as Jer. 9:25 puts it. In fact Jeremiah put Israel in the same category with the uncircumcised nations of Egypt, Edom and Moab, for Israel was "uncircumcised in heart" (Jer. 9:26). It seems unlikely that a Jewish prophet would ever say such a thing: that even though Israel was circumcised in the flesh, they were nonetheless as uncircumcised as the pagan nations, for the circumcision did not reach the heart. What the knife could do was not enough; the Spirit of God had to touch the heart. It reveals a dimension of deep, spiritual religion in the Old Testament that is often neglected.

In Jer. 4:4 the imagery really comes alive: "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, remove the foreskin of your hearts, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem." This anticipates Paul's language in Col. 2:11: "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ." The apostle indicates in the next verse that this occurs in baptism. This means that baptism represents a changed heart and a renewed life, "the circumcision of Christ" meaning that the Spirit of God is to cut away "the body of flesh" of our sinful lives.

If integrity is to be defined as backing up our profession with our deeds, then we may conclude that both circumcision and baptism, the symbols of covenantal relationship, have often lacked in integrity. Circumcised people have not always behaved as circumcised people, and baptized people have not always conducted themselves as baptized people. So in Scripture we have the idea of both "circumcised and yet uncircumcised" and "baptized and yet unbaptized."

This is so significant in the Old Testament that Dt. 29:6 anticipates the eventual renewal of Israel as: "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, until you love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul, and so have life." To the circumcised he spoke of the circumcision of the heart, which they had not experienced.

Is it not therefore possible that the modern church, including those of us who have made much of baptism, is largely "baptized and yet unbaptized"? And might not our prophets urge upon us the baptism of the heart? There is the "other side" of baptism, the

internal meanings, that we have neglected in our rightful concern for external correctness. The apostle, for instance, refers to “you have come to fulness of life in him” in connection with being raised with Christ from the watery grave of baptism (Col. 2:10-12), and in Gal. 3:27 he says we put on the likeness of Christ in baptism. If the baptized were known for their imitation of Christ, his gentleness and meekness, they would not have to argue about modes. While it is appropriate that we vigorously bear witness to baptism by immersion, it is far more important that we show by our faith and conduct what baptism means.

Baptism means a change in our lives that is described in Scripture as “the circumcision of Christ” upon our hearts. It is appropriate that we are “baptists,” but what irony it is for such folk to be “unbaptized baptists.” And this is what happens when religion does everything except touch the inner springs of the heart and mind. --- *the Editor*

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Churches of Christ and Christian Churches . . .

MERGING CHURCHES: EYE TO THE FUTURE?

The readers of this journal, who are disturbed by the senseless divisions of the Stone-Campbell unity movement, will be pleased to learn of two recent mergers in Michigan. The University Church of Christ (non-instrumental) has merged with the University Christian Church (independent, instrumental) in East Lansing. The Fenton Church of Christ (nonisntrumental) and the Fenton Church of Christ (independent, instrumental) have also merged.

The correspondent bearing this news pointed to the advantages of a combined ministry and to the savings in double property costs and general expenses in running but one church instead of two.

Of far greater value of course is that Jesus Christ is obeyed in that those who were once separated from each other are now together, united as one church and working together. All such instances are a small part of the answer to our Lord’s prayer for the unity of all believers.

We do not of course have to merge in order to accept each other as equals and work together as one people. But in those areas where one of our churches or perhaps both are struggling to have a meaningful ministry it makes so much godly sense that it is embarrassing that it happens so seldom. But now it has happened *twice* in the course of a year, both instances in a state where our witness has never been strong. This could well be the eye to the future. It is so wise and appropriate that we may conclude that it will grow

more common with the years. The churches in Michigan, with a few other instances here and there, are showing us that it can be done *with Christian grace,* and what is more gracious than brethren meeting together and working together in unity?

As to how merging congregations will resolve the instrument question is the business of said congregations. Since the instrument question must be regarded as a matter of a church's personal conviction or opinion, the issue must be settled on that basis. If a merger, which can be a beautiful testimonial to unity, means more to the non-instrumentalists than the instrument, they can join the instrumentalists without any problem. If the instrumentalists, on the other hand, see that their non-instrument brethren, while committed to unity, are sincerely locked-in to acappella singing, they can give up the instrument for the sake of a merger.

Or they might strike a compromise, a virtue that must be recognized if mergers are to become common, and be both instrumental and non-instrumental. At least one church in California resolved to be instrumental for one service, acappella for another. A church in Nashville is acappella for congregational singing and instrumental for special music.

Those of us in non-instrument churches must recognize one crucial fact as we think realistically about the uniting church of Jesus Christ upon earth: *the non-instrument posture is an anomaly in the church at large.* We are virtually alone in holding to such a practice, especially in making such a big deal of it, even a test of fellowship and the one sure mark of identification. If we were acappella because we love great congregational singing in which an instrument appears as an obstruction, but allowed for it when it was *needed,* our position would be much more defensible. We are gradually coming to see, it appears, that our traditional argument that the instrument is anti-scriptural and therefore sinful, is untenable. If the matter were as "plain gospel" as we have made it, we would not be alone in such a contention.

So as more mergers become a possibility we must realize that, in the light of the universal church, we must make *some* compromise as to instrumental music. Otherwise we have to take the position that the universal church of Christ can become one around the world only by becoming acappella, wholly acappella in its corporate worship. No one with any sensitivity at all for the catholic church upon earth could hold such a view. So, if we are to be a unity people, we must make compromises in this matter, especially when mergers are in the making. We can of course remain strictly acappella in most of our churches in a uniting, universal church, but we will not make it a matter of fellowship and will accept other Christians as equal to ourselves.

But in the many instances where it would be appropriate that we merge with Christian Churches, who are so very near to us in many ways, we cannot make a non-instrument position a condition for the merger. We will have to make some compromises.

The end result *could* be that our merged churches, some of them at least, could be among the world's greatest singing churches, *acappella,* but also instrumental for special music and special occasions.

You will notice that in being strictly acappella we have had to reject special music, which is to our hurt, and thus have *only* congregational singing, which hardly conforms to the likes of 1 Cor. 14:26, which calls for other than congregational singing. In fact we would be hard put to *prove.* congregational singing from Scripture. I take it to be our own arrangement, but it *probably* (but only probably) has antecedents in the primitive churches.

It will be simple enough for Churches of Christ to remain acappella so long as we sing only congregationally. But can you imagine Pat Boone or Amy Grant, both of whom are Church of Christ folk, conducting a concert acappella? I was on a program with Amy in a Nashville Church of Christ a few years back. We sang acappella as a congregation, while she exhorted us with "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" with instrumentation, her own guitar. And to hear her sing *My Father's Eyes,* as she did that night! Despite a houseful of non-instrumentalists there was apparently no problem to anyone.

When a tradition gets in our way and keeps us from drawing upon the varied gifts of our people and unnecessarily restricts our possibilities, we need to modify (but not discard) our tradition.

There is hardly a question but our folk are changing along these lines for the good. Two mergers with Christian Churches in a single year would have been unthinkable a few years back. And the news item from Korea, which we noted in these columns in our last issue, of Churches of Christ and Christian Churches uniting in one convention of churches, which now numbers 300, instrumental and non-instrumental. The instrument question was resolved in a reasonable and dignified compromise. Churches will be instrumental or non-instrumental, according to conviction, with no lines drawn, while in convention of two or more churches the singing will be acappella. Christian compromise!

It is noteworthy that the American editors of non-instrument persuasion have not published this epoch-making news from Korea. Think of it, 300 churches of the Stone-Campbell Movement settling their differences and working together in fellowship! And the editor-bishops say nothing about it! It only reveals their fear that "the System" over which they "preside" (sort of) is going to get away from them. People who are not yet themselves free are uncomfortable with liberating news. The truth is we have leaders who do not want

our people united, except on their terms. And so they will have no good word for the merging churches.

But the handwriting is clearly on the wall, and the "bishops" would do well to face facts. Take this letter which came from deep in the heart of Texas while I was writing this essay. It reflects a reaction that is taking place all across the land. Since the writer does not want persons or place identified, I will honor that in quoting from him:

> The mainline Church of Christ here is looking for a minister and we were wondering if you know of anyone with a more open view that might be interested. I assure you that this church is not "open" yet and probably won't be for sometime. Yet there is a remnant that is pushing in that direction. Fellowship with the Christian Church would be a good place to start. The applicants we have heard, especially from the preacher schools, are arrogant and dogmatic and seem incapable of preaching the gospel in simple terms.

You will notice that the brother has little doubt but what his church will change. It is but a matter of time! And the handwriting is there: the rank and file of our folk have had it when it comes to arrogance, dogmatism, sectarianism, and exclusivism --- and they want out of it! But they are not leaving. They will stay and work humbly for change --- and they will win! Mainly because they are right. Wrong can occupy the throne only so long.

I tell Ouida that by the time I am "absent from this planet" (to use one of Campbell's favorite phrases) we will have the majority of Church of Christ folk on our side, which we believe is the side of freedom. She says that that will be a difficult role for us and we might not know how to handle it!

(The majority is *already* with us, or we with them. It is a matter of getting them to break their silence and speak up and act. The rank and file are beginning to do this. As for our leaders, it is partly a matter of their having the courage to speak up and reveal what they really believe.) --- *the Editor*

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MARKS OF GREATNESS

If a man seeks for greatness, let him forget greatness and ask for truth, and he will receive both. --- Horace Mann

I am doing this essay at the suggestion of my dear Ouida, who is my most trusted confidant. If she thinks something should be written, then it should be written. That comes close to what Pilate said, “What I have written I have written.”

Frequently I share goodies with her from my reading, and she helps me to dangle them about. We do together what I have often laid on my students in confronting an idea: (1) what does it really say?; (2) is it true?; (3) if true, is it important, does it matter?

This time around I was reading her some stuff I had underlined in Emerson’s essay on Self-Reliance, which I was reading as part of my research on a Christian world view, which is the theme of this journal for this year and next. As much as I admire Emerson, especially his doctrine of self-reliance, I consider him more humanistic than Christian. Man is not and cannot be self-reliant, not in any ultimate sense, for he is not responsible for his own existence and is thus responsible to his Creator. It was an incipient self-reliance that led to man’s fall, and as a fallen creature man must have a commodity from his Creator that he can find nowhere else, grace.

Emerson was not as orthodox as I. In fact he gave up his pulpit because he was not orthodox. But he was honest, and we all admire him for that. And he wielded a pungent pen, creating some of the most penetrating essays ever written. In my own thinking I seek to “canonize” Emerson, or interpret him as if he were a believer. But that is another subject. Emerson is generally very quotable, especially when you have someone like Ouida to quote him to.

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.

Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.

There is a time in every man’s education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion.

To be great is to be misunderstood.

As men’s prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines.

Emerson is a veritable goldmine of such “hard rock” philosophy, controversial and debatable to be sure. But as *I* interpret him, he is on target. In that last quote about consistency, for instance, he goes on to say: “With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what

you think now in hard words and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradicts everything you said today."

I like that kind of stuff, perhaps because it gets close to some of my own experiences. Some of our debaters make a big deal out of catching an opponent in an inconsistency, and they'll research his life to find one. "You said such and such back in 1958," they will say. So what? It is only a fool that never changes his mind, and, as Emerson would no doubt say, it is only a fool that thinks he has to be consistent all his life.

But these were not the ideas that led Ouida to urge me to write this article. She is hard to please. Even Emerson must come up with something special to get into *Restoration Review* with Ouida calling the plays.

It was only when we discussed Emerson's idea of greatness that Ouida said, "Why don't you write an article about that." This is the paragraph. Ponder it for yourself:

> What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

Ah, for the wisdom that comes from the sage of Concord! If heeded it would not only make a person great but a nation as well. And it could start in Washington where we have bureaucrats who suppose they know more about how to manage our lives than we do.

What is greatness to Emerson? He pinpoints it: *the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.* What is he saying? Two things are easy: to be like the world around you and to be your own true self when apart from the crowd. What is difficult is to be your own true self in the midst of the crowd, and that with perfect sweetness. That is to be great!

Cynicism is no part of the answer for our troubled world. Anybody can bellyache. It is the guy that can stand up there and smile with "perfect sweetness" and stand for the right let come what may who is the answer. He who waits to see the way the crowd goes will save neither himself nor his people. And we do not grumble our way to victory, however right we may be.

Emerson's idea of greatness is not all that different from what our Lord taught when he related greatness to childlikeness. Not only does the child have that sweetness that Emerson refers to, but he has not yet learned to deceive himself and thus to mimic the crowd. The child knows no better than to be himself wherever he is and he will say what he thinks if he says anything at all. He has not yet learned double talk. And cynicism and defeatism, those twin blights upon all that is good, are no part of childlikeness.

If I cannot have Emerson, I will take Horace Mann, quoted at the outset, who provides us still with one more goodie about greatness: *it does not come by being sought.* We must rather seek truth: truth about ourselves, our universe, our Creator. In finding truth we find the only greatness that really matters.

And again this is what Jesus has been saying to us all along. *You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* If there is no greatness (magnanimity) without truth, there is no greatness without freedom. Especially freedom from self-deceit. "The unexamined life is not worth living." Socrates said it well. --- *the Editor*

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RENEWAL THROUGH RECOVERY (5)

W Carl Ketcherside

The first time he sent them out is recorded in Matthew 10. There were twelve of them, men of different backgrounds and temperaments. They were rugged individualists. Some of them were fishermen. Some were caught up in the tangled political situation of the day. All of them needed training and discipline. They were issued stern orders. They were to take no money, no food collection bag, no extra clothing. They traveled light. It was enough for them to realize that "the disciple was to be like his teacher." Their territory was limited and circumscribed. They were to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Many of them did not know they were sheep and most of them did not know they were lost. They resented the implication that they were.

The message was plain and direct. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," Matthew was a Jew. He knew the Jews rebelled at saying the name of God. It was too sacred, too holy. So he records that they were to proclaim the kingdom by its place of origin, rather than by its originator. They were to say nothing about the Messiah. They were simply to announce that the rule of heaven was near and growing nearer. But that was before he was granted full authority in heaven and on earth. It was before his betrayal by one of them, before his indescribable agony upon the cross, before his death and rising again.

When all of these things had occurred, and they were all connected with the coming of the kingdom, the orders changed. Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” Pause a moment with eyes closed. Think of the word “all” as used here. Let it strike a spark of fire in your consciousness. All authority — all nations — all that I have commanded — always.”

That message faithfully proclaimed can never fail. The promise connected with it is sure. It is certain. “I am with you always.” It is a message, not of the kingdom, but of the king; not of the called, but of the caller. And it was first heralded in its fulness and perfection on the day of the cereal offering when the two loaves of bread were waved before the Lord. Everyone was hilarious with joy, praising the Lord, singing psalms, thankful for the harvest which had been theirs. Suddenly it happened. There came a sound from heaven. It was like the noise of a tornado. It filled the house and persisted. Split tongues of licking flame appeared. They rested upon each of them. The Holy Spirit filled them like waiting vessels. They began to speak in other tongues. The Spirit directed their utterance.

That is enough. You know the sequel. You remember that Peter stood up and addressed the cosmopolitan crowd. They represented seventeen nations, languages and tongues. He told them of Jesus whom God had attested with mighty works and signs. He told them of his death at the hands of a lawless mob. He pointed out that God had raised him up, and that the eleven were all witnesses. Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God. He had received from the Father the promise of the Spirit. He had poured him out and this is what they saw and heard. He finished with the stirring and impassioned plea, “let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

The effect was electrifying. The hearers were cut to the heart. They cried out to Peter and the other apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” That same day three thousand souls were added to them. They heeded the words of Peter to reform and be baptized. The ekklesia was born that day of the new covenant, the Jerusalem which is free and from above, and is the mother of us all. The kingdom which will never die and never be left to other people began, not with the clash of arms, or the screams of the mutilated and dying, but under the gentle and tender ministrations of the Spirit of God, the other Comforter sent down from above.

The ekklesia began with the proclamation of the Good News. The Good News that God had raised Jesus who had been crucified and made him both ruler and anointed Savior. It was the Good News of a person and what had happened to him, and it was also the news of what can happen to us because of it. The gospel (as the word has come to be called in the English tongue) was fully proclaimed that day. It was perfect and complete. Not another sentence was ever added to it. And it was fully accredited, accepted and obeyed. The idea of the gradual growth of the gospel as the church grew and advanced is a false one. It is dangerous as well. It really is destructive of all we hold dear.

If the gospel preached on Pentecost were a partial and an incomplete one, the ekklesia which sprung from it was also without some of its vital parts. That is just not true. The ekklesia, in its infancy was a body. And like any baby, it was in full possession of all of its parts and functions. It could begin to do what it was created to do. And now that we seek renewal and refreshing it can only come as we re-proclaim that original message. Under the influence of the Spirit of God let us herald the news of the resurrected Savior of men. Let us not be confused or confounded by a misplaced emphasis.

We can do incalculable injury to the family of God by inventing and emphasizing such other things as circumcision, eating of meats, or observation of days. Not only are they confusing but they detract from the message. The truth of the gospel, the central fact which makes it the Good News is justification by faith in Jesus. Anything which derogates that, which conceals it beneath excess verbiage or theological jargon, which obscures and befogs it, is not the gospel and can never be. We must determine not to know anything among the pagans of this day except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. It is this which is a real stumbling block to much of our world, and foolishness to many of the rest. But to us who are saved, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

And while much of our world is looking for a sign as a demonstration of power, and the remainder is seeking to absorb the philosophic wisdom of this passing age, expressed in gobble-de-gook, we can do no better than to point men to the cross, stark and naked against the evening sky of history, deserted because he who was hanged on it has risen again. Perhaps if the people of God had not been led into the great scams of the ages, by clever manipulators who were quick-change artists, we might be closer to heaven’s ideal than we are. But this is not time for weeping over what might have been.

Neither is it a time for vain contrasts with the days of the apostles. Are things worse with us than they were with Imperial Rome in the dark days of the Caesars? Yet, it was to them that Paul wrote, “Truth has been brought out into the open through the writings of the prophets, and by the command of the eternal God is made known to all nations, so that all men may believe and obey.” We are proclaiming to the wrong people. We are talking to

ourselves. Our message has turned from a proclamation to a recitation. Our dialogue has become a monologue. Our audiences have all become like sword-swallowers in the sideshow of a circus, taking in the weapon of the Spirit without even gulping. What about the black neighbors down the street? What about the Chinese boat people who have come to our shores? Are they not a part of the "all nations"?

Are things worse today than they were in Corinth, with its open and licit prostitution, pornography and practice of magic? It was to them the apostle wrote, "The message about Christ has become so firmly established in you, that you have not failed to receive a single blessing, as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed." Those who had wallowed in the slimy cesspools of sin, had been reclaimed, washed, sanctified, and redeemed. The proclamation of Jesus had come to them like a clap of thunder out of a clear, cloudless sky. That same message can come with the same effect today. The reason we do not see the effect is because we do not hear the message.

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

James P. Needham, editor of *Torch* which has its constituency primarily among "conservative" Churches of Christ, recently editorialized about preachers. Quoting a sister to the effect that "we pay our preacher $30,000 per year to sit in his study," the editor contends that people are not saved by pulpit preaching as much as through personal contact. So, while not begrudging the preacher for his pay, he wants him out ministering to those who need him most.

Editor Needham is also "alarmed and disgusted at the rash of fornicating preachers among us," adding that it has reached epidemic proportions. He sees this as a cause of divorce among preachers, and he personally knows 25 preachers who have divorced. And he says he can name ten to fifteen preachers who have been accused of immoral conduct in the last two years. Since preachers, like politicians, are fallen men, we should not be shocked over sin, whether in Washington or in the pulpit. It is only when men "Walk by the Spirit" that we can expect a difference, but perhaps editor Needham is not asking too much to expect preachers to be men of the Spirit. This may be especially difficult in a hard-line, legalistic atmosphere.

During the summer there was a Gay Pride Day in Washington with 20,000 homosexuals and lesbians on the march. The mayor of the city, Marion Barry, who has appointed 60 gays to leadership positions in the city government, urged all gays to come out of the closet, politically as well as socially. The *Washington Post* estimates that 20% of the population of Washington D.C. is homosexual or lesbian.

Also during the summer President Reagan received a standing ovation before the PTA convention in Albuquerque when he insisted that the First Amendment to the Constitution wasn't written to exclude religion from our schools. He touched a responsive chord when he invoked the name of God and asserted: "He who has so blessed this land should never have been expelled from our classrooms."

Writing in *Harbinger, Too* (Box 1449, Orange Park, FL. 32067), N. Dane Tyer of Tulsa states: "I am a restorationist. I am committed to the present day realization of New Testament Christianity. Our focus, however, cannot be upon restoring the New Testament Church. This only leads to confusion." The focus, he says, must be to regain the focus of the apostles, that is Jesus Christ." Don't you believe that all of us are restorationists in this sense?

Carl Ketcherside attended a world evangelism conference in Amsterdam, Holland during the summer. He writes of how one Sunday afternoon the delegates filled 64 buses and went to the beaches and parks to share their faith. "I had incredible experiences," he says, "The beach is wall to wall with people, the women all topless and wearing the flimsiest bikinis. We won victories for Jesus." We've asked him to write a series on his diverse experiences at the Amsterdam conference. Later in the summer he and Nell took a second trip to Europe, unrelated we may presume to crowded beaches and topless bikinis.

I was pleased to join many others in a volume of congratulatory letters to Leslie G. Thomas of the Brainerd Church of Christ in Chattanooga, who celebrated his 88th birthday anniversary, his 62nd wedding anniversary, and 70 years in the ministry all the same week. He still writes (36 books so far), counsels, and teaches three classes a week.

Churches of Christ, along with individuals, in 49 states, Canada, Bermuda, and Europe have contributed more than $1.5 million to feed the hungry in Ghana in recent months. They are also praying for rain for that drouth-stricken nation.

The *Times- Tribune* of Corbin, KY. published the story recently of how Steven Myers, a British Jewish politician, set out on an odyssey from London in search of fulfillment. His long search ended in a small church, the Shiner Church of Christ, near Williamsburg, KY. Referring to his baptism into Christ, he is quoted as saying: "When I came to the surface I felt that I had been pried loose from the seabed where I had been all my life. My baptism

has resulted in an absolute peace of mind." He was helped along the way by Janie Catron, a reader of this journal. Mr. Myers plans to return to England to "help his fellow Jews fight the same battle he has won."

After 28 years as editor of *Firm Foundation* Reuel Lemmons wrote his last editorial on Aug. 23, in which he said: "We have some strong misgivings about the shattered Restoration movement. Continued polarization threatens to destroy it entirely." But Reuel would not likely equate the demise of the Restoration Movement with the end of the church itself, though some of our editors draw no distinction. I wrote the retiring editor a "Goodbye, Mr. Chips" letter and meant it. The paper has been sold and the indications are that it will be more "conservative." Reuel says the new owners are set upon a direction incompatible with his thinking, while the old owners promise that the paper will continue in the tradition of G. H. P. Showalter, who pre-ceded Reuel as editor. They didn't say it would continue in the tradition of Reuel Lemmons or even Showalter and Lemmons. If this means bad blood, we are sorry, but those who know our history know that this is business as usual for our folk. Reuel sees himself as a "middle-of-the-road" editor, which may seem odd to some. All of us suppose we are in the middle-of-the-road, which may only mean that the "road" is very wide and the "middle" has narrow margins. But Reuel's unhappy editorial may only mean that however well-intentioned he was he succeeded in pleasing but very few. To borrow from the metaphor, those who hog the middle-of-the-road are sometimes the same ones who do a lot of swerving, first to the right and then to the left, so that they are not in the middle as much as they think.

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BOOK NOTES

Michael Green of Oxford, England is one of the church's most exciting writers these days. His *Evangelism Now and Then* tells how what happened in the early church can happen now. Only 4.10 postpaid.

William Neil's new *More Difficult Sayings of Jesus* treats 31 sayings of our Lord, while his earlier *Difficult Sayings of Jesus* dealt with 34 sayings. His treatment on Jesus not abolishing the law is itself worth the price, and you will learn from his handling of "Leave the dead to bury their own dead." The new book is 6.50 and the first 2.10, postpaid. You may have both 8.00 even. We highly recommend these excellent studies.

A recent book by John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds,* deals with the art of preaching in the 20th century. In a chapter on how to prepare sermons he tells a humorous story about a lazy preacher. His chapter on courage and humility makes for good reading for layman as well. It says much for this book that it is authored by one of England's great pulpit preachers. 12.95 postpaid.

We offer a C. S. Lewis five-pac for 16.00 postpaid. In attractive softcover are: *Mere Christianity, Miracles, Problem of Pain, Screwtape Letters, The Great Divorce.* You should read Lewis if you haven't; reread him if you have. These make ideal gifts. Separately they are 3.50 each postpaid.

That fine old book on pioneer preacher Raccoon John Smith, titled *Life of Elder John Smith* by John A. Williams has been reprinted. It makes delightful reading if you are interested in our history. 12.50 pp. And the *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* remains in print and is available at 21.95 postpaid.

College Press is producing an extensive set of *What the Bible Says.* These are handsome hardcover volumes at 13.50 each. We suggest you start with any or all of these: *What the Bible Says About Sexual Identity,* by Eleanor Daniel; *What the Bible Says About Salvation,* by Virgil Warren; *What the Bible Says About Covenant,* by Mont V. Smith; *What the Bible Says About Faith,* by C. C. Crawford. These are all highly resourceful, strongly biblical, and well-indexed.

Except for a few copies yet on our shelves, *The Stone-Campbell Movement* by Leroy Garrett is temporarily out of print. Sold out in 18 months! That has surprised us all, and now we know that our people *are* interested in history. A second printing should be ready by fall, so send us your order. The price remains 21. 95 postpaid for the present. We will still send you one free if you will get up a club of eight subs (including renewals) at 3.00 each, a total of 24.00. We offer this mainly so that new people can be introduced to this journal.

READERS' EXCHANGE

As soon as I got home from the post office with it I started reading the *Stone-Campbell Movement* and I like what I read. We are having extreme hot days this July, also nights, which is unusual for Florida. The nights are usually cool. --- *Robert Knowlton, Cortez, FL.*

Send me another copy of *The Stone-Campbell Movement.* I have given away five copies and I plan to keep this one, so please autograph it. --- *Janie Catron, Corbin, KY.*

I don't think its my imagination that your history book and the *Restoration Review* are changing some of our preachers' attitudes. --- *Darrell Bruce, Owensville, IL.*

The Stone-Campbell Movement is great. I am going through it the third time. --- *Jerry Cook, Rifle, CO.*

Just a few lines of appreciation of your history book. I am overwhelmed and excited about the book, like a child with a toy. Thank you. It is written in simple English so that a man like me, a non-English speaking Christian, can read it easily. The part about brother Ketcherside was thrilling and the section about the pre-millennial segment was warmly and fairly written. --- *Moto Nomura, Tokyo, Japan*

I would like to thank you and Ouida for all the work that went into your book *The Stone-Campbell Movement,* and I want to recommend it to all the readers of your journal. It helps us to see where we stand in the flow of reformation history and gives guidance to where we could go from here. I appreciate your treatment of the leaders of the Movement with respect and dignity, acknowledging their dedication to God and His word, yet without apology showing how they, as have we all come short of living out the greatest commandment of loving God and our neighbor. --- *Don Morris, Nashville, TN.*

(These testimonials may encourage you to give this history book a try, even if you do not easily take to history. The book is temporarily out of print - *sold out!* - but the publisher expects the second printing by mid-September. If you send us a check for 21.95, we'll pay the postage and put it in the mail to you the same day, if indeed the second printing is on time. --- *Ed.*)

I have missed Carl Ketcherside's *Mission Messenger* and am enjoying *Restoration Review.* I am often fearful to let go of my old prejudices. Trying to sort through them to keep God's truth and dump the rest is exhilarating but scarey. I often struggle to remember that I'm not alone nor powerless in my quest. God really does honor our seeking Him with diligence and faith. Whew! ---*Kelia Ballou, Houston, Tx.*

We're living in exciting times for the church and our faith should be made stronger by the many positive things happening for the cause of Christ today. --- *Tom Johnson, Austin, TX.*

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